

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELFAS 00035 250234Z
ACTION EUR-12

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UNCLAS BELFAST 035

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: NORTHERN IRELAND: LULL AFTER LA MON MASSACRE

REF: BELFAST 032

1. REACTION TO THE BURNING OF 12 PEOPLE FEBRUARY 17 CONTINUES, WITH HARSH WORDS FROM LOYALIST LEADERS, A CONSIDERABLE TURNOUT AT FUNERAL SERVICES AND ONE MEETING CALLED BY THE ORANGE ORDER BEFORE BELFAST CITY HALL, AND SOME BRIEF WORK STOPPAGES IN COMMEMORATION. THERE NEVERTHELESS IS SOME DECOMPRESSION AFTER THE INITIAL OUTRAGE. THE PROVISIONAL IRA HAS DONE LITTLE. WE HAVE SEEN NAMES OF LOYALIST EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS AND PERSONS THESE DAYS THAT HAD NOT APPEARED FOR MANY MONTHS, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE YET OF INTIMIDATION OR VIOLENCE FROM THEIR SIDE. THESE EXTREMISTS SEEM WILLING TO LEAVE THE OUTRAGE PERPETRATED BY THE PROVISIONALS UNIQUELY IN THE PUBLIC MIND.

2. POLICE RELEASED EIGHT OF THE 20 PEOPLE PICKED UP IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BOMBING, AND ARRESTED ANOTHER 13. FOUR OF THOSE NOW HELD WERE CHARGED WITH VARIOUS SECURITY OFFENSES, INCLUDING A MURDER LAST AUGUST. IT LOOKS AS THOUGH THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LA MON BOMBING ARE PART OF THE BELFAST GROUP THAT RAN THE SERIES OF ATTACKS ON HOTELS BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

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PAGE 02 BELFAS 00035 250234Z

3. LOYALIST LEADERS CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR HARSHER SECURITY MEASURES, AND TO ATTACK THE REPUBLIC AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. TYPICAL OF RANK-AND-FILE THINKING -- ALTHOUGH NOT AS VITUPERATIVELY WORDED -- WAS A LETTER TO THE BELFAST "NEWS LETTER": SECRETARY OF STATE "MASON HAS HAD HIS CHANCE, BUT HE MISJUDGED THE FEELINGS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND

PEOPLE AND THE MALEVOLENCE AND STRENGTH OF THE IRA."

STOUT

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